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REVIEW OF SECTORAL CLUSTER: LAND, DESERTIFICATION, FORESTS AND BIODIVERSITY

Letter dated 3 April 1995 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

From 20 to 22 February 1995, the Netherlands hosted the International Workshop on Integrated Land Mangement.

The Workshop was an inter-sessional meeting, held to prepare for the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (11-28 April 1995), which will discuss integrated land management as one of its sectoral themes.

I have the honour to transmit to you the report of the Workshop (see annex) and would appreciate if you could arrange for the report to be circulated as an official document for consideration by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its current session, under item 6 of its agenda.

(Signed) N. H. BIEGMAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON AGENDA 21 - CHAPTER 10

Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources

International Agricultural Centre,
Wageningen, the Netherlands
February 20-22, 1995

Conclusions and Recommendations of the workshop

. Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries
. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
. Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment of the Netherlands, in cooperation with
. the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

The International workshop on Agenda 21 - Chapter 10: Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources was held in Wageningen, the Netherlands, from 20 - 22 february 1995. The objective of the workshop, for which the initiative was jointly taken by FAO and the Government of the Netherlands, was

(i) to formulate recommendations and policy options on the implementation of Chapter 10 to be submitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) for consideration at its third session in April 1995, and

(ii) to exchange knowledge and experience on the planning and management of land resources.

The workshop was attended by more than 80 senior officials from 32 countries from all regions, 6 intergovernmental organizations and 6 non-governmental organizations.

Chapter 10 calls for an integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources through re-organizing and, where necessary, strengthening of decision-making structures, including policies and planning and management structures. Such an approach recognizes the need for participation of all stakeholders in land use decision making, and bridges the gap between the production and income objectives of land users and the long term objective of preserving natural resources. Chapter 10 has an umbrella function for the other land-related chapters which deal with forests, mountains, desertification and sustainable agriculture and rural development as more specific forms of land use. It has, therefore, many linkages with the other chapters, but clearly has its own objectives for the integrated process of planning and management of land resources, as set out in para. 10.5:

(i) to review and develop policies to support the best possible use of land and the sustainable management of land resources, by not later than 1996;

(ii) to improve and strengthen planning, management and evaluation systems for land and land resources, by not later than 2000;

(iii) to strengthen institutions and coordinating mechanisms for land and land resources, by not later than 1998;

(iv) to create mechanisms to facilitate the active involvement and participation of all concerned, particularly communities and people at the local level, in decision-making on land use and management, by not later than 1996.

The workshop had selected the following three themes for discussion:

(i) the integration of objectives and policy formulation for planning and management of land resources in rural areas,

(ii) managing a planning process for the use of land resources in rural areas with all stakeholders, and

(iii) possibilities for sustainable economic development in rural areas, with emphasis on non-traditional uses of land.

These were also the subjects of the keynote addresses and of the working groups and were elaborated on in the Issues-Paper prepared by the Winand Staring Centre for Ingrated Land, Soil and Water Research in Wageningen. The workshop took the "meso-level" (intermediate between central government and local community) as a starting point for analysis of the possibilities of integration of goals. During the discussions it was recognized that, given the specific characteristics of regions, a ranking of goals (ecological, economic, social) has to be made.

The workshop had before it the Issues-Paper mentioned earlier and the background paper Planning for Sustainable Use of Land Resources: Towards a New Approach, prepared by FAO. Furthermore, 31 completed questionnaires on a specific national case of intermediate-level planning and management of land resources were returned by participants, of which a summary was presented and made available to the workshop. These cases showed the progress achieved by individual countries in the implementation of Chapter 10. The full report of the workshop will contain an extensive summary of the cases. It is planned to also prepare a more extensive study on the cases. Both activities can be regarded as a contribution to the fullfilment of the requirements set forth in para. 10.12.d.

The workshop actively discussed, especially in the working groups, many items relating to the integrated approach to planning and management of land resources and agreed upon a set of conclusions and recommendations. The country cases submitted by the participants turned out to be a valuable source of information for additional recommendations on the implementation of Chapter 10. A number of recommendations are already included in the text of Chapter 10 or other Chapters of the land cluster. The outcome of the discussions emphasized the importance of many of these recommendations, but these are not repeated in the present document. The other recommendations that were formulated by the meeting are either a further specification of existing points in Chapter 10, or are new and additional points; these are included in the present document.

Discussions were held in the spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's terrestrial ecosystems. Referring to principle 7 of the Rio declaration it was recognized that States have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear for the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the technologies and financial resources they command. Concerning the latter aspect reference was also made to Chapter 33, para' s 33.13 and 33.14.

The Government of the Netherlands will present the conclusions and recommendations of the workshop to the Intersessional Meeting on Sectorial Subjects in March 1995 and to the third session of the CSD in April 1995, and will request that this document be considered as an official document for these meetings.

PART TWO: RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants of the workshop submit the following recommendations to the Commission on Sustainable Development. In this regard they recognize that recoomendations should be tailored to the particular situation within countries. National integrated land resources planning strategies must recognise differences relating to:

- Rural vs. urban needs;
- Regular vs. emergency situations;
- Variations in preparedness in terms of the state of development of legislation. policies, institutions, concern for biodiversity as against other demands on land resources, and public participation in planning and decision-making.

All countries are committed to the timetable for chapter 10 but various constraints mean that some countries will take longer to meet the objectives fully and will have to intensify efforts to achieve them.

1. INTEGRATION OF OBJECTIVES AND POLICY FORMULATION FOR LAND USE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND RESOURCES IN RURAL AREAS.

Under this theme the workshop participants recommend that:

1.1. Governments develop a framework or guidance to implementing agencies for integrated land use planning and management including explicit aims and taking into account what has been achieved so far.

1.2. Governments review land tenure arrangements or legislation with the objective of providing long-term security on the land, taking into account the needs of all stakeholders, especially the farmers and all those that are effectively involved in the agricultural sector, both men and women.

1.3. Governments review economic policies and revise economic instruments to reinforce the positive consequences and decrease the negative consequences of public and private activities for sustainable management of land resources.

1.4. To provide the investment in rural areas that is needed to implement Agenda 21, governments assess and, if necessary, redress the balance of resource flows between rural and urban areas.

1.5. For targetting common sustainable development goals and an integrated approach, governments not only review the mandates of institutions but also pool budgets of sectors.

1.6. To cope with emergency situations beyond the normal planning scenario, governments provide for a rapid alert and response capability.

1.7. Governments formulate and adopt legal and technical adjustment mechanisms for the effective promotion of and the support to the stability of agricultural land use, and for sustaining competition and complementarity, in economic terms, of agriculture and other forms of land use.

1.8. Governments design land valuation systems and standards for agriculture that will quantify the social, economic, environmental and demographic impacts associated with the transfer of productive arable land to other uses.

1.9. Governments and international organizations cooperate in identifying national and international sustained sources of funding to carry out integrated land use planning and management with full stakeholder participation.

1.10. The various forms and degrees of land degradation, their socio-economic causes and effects, particularly poverty, need to be given prominance in al programmes for integrated planning and management of land and water resources, taking into account the linkages with the aims of other relevant Chapters of Agenda 21, such as 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 18.

2. MANAGING A PLANNING PROCESS FOR THE USE OF LAND RESOURCES OF RURAL AREAS WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Under this theme the workshop participants recommend that:

2.1. Governments promote capacity building, including leadership skills, so that communities and people's organizations, with special attention to women and youth, can participate in, or initiate local land use planning. Funding for upgrading of technical skills and training will be needed.

2.2. Governments focus on financial support for a catalytic approach to start community participation processes at all levels. This should include capacity building of grassroot-level and voluntary associations. Financial support can be more effective if it addresses causes instead of symptoms.

2.3. Governments incorporate indigenous knowledge and methods of land resources management into their policies and development programs and assist people's organizations to do likewise. Research will be needed to uncover this knowledge and incorporate it into formal data bases and planning procedures.

2.4. Governments develop criteria and performance indicators for sustainable land use, allowing flexibility for sub-national and local variations.

2.5. Governments establish and strengthen conflict resolution mechanisms, in particular at the local level.

2.6. If land reforms are considered necessary, these should be introduced in a gradual and progressive manner so as to maintain a minimum support of all stakeholders.

2.7. Governments cooperate on funding, training and technical support involving multilateral, regional, U.N., NGO, farmers' organisations and bilateral external support agencies.

2.8. No set planning procedure is applicable in all situations. International and national organisations should develop modular planning tools so that specific combinations of modules can be applied to individual situations. Workshops for land use planning should be conducted to familiarise policy makers and technical specialists with these new tools.

2.9. Stakeholders at the meso-level should be informed by their national authorities about the framework within which they participate in the planning process and about the extent to which they can influence the framework itself as well as the outcome of the planning process.

2.10. Public authorities should enter into partnerships with stakeholders to produce local plans and action strategies for development, for the security of individuals, and for the allevation of poverty; they should provide the link between broader land use and sectoral planning, bringing together the resources necessary to achieve optimal results.

2.11. Governments and organizations recognize differences in interests of stakeholders and their representative NGO's and, in particular, to ensure incorporation of legitimate concerns and participation by land users including women.

3. POSSIBILITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS.

Under this theme the workshop participants recommend that:

3.1. Governments provide a national framework to assess the costs and benefits of different land use options or developments.

3.2. For any public intervention or expenditure (a tax, a subsidy, a regulation, a program of activities, an investment project), governments select at least one performance indicator and monitor it.

3.3. Governments follow sound macro-economic and effective poverty reduction policies as a necessary condition for more sustainable management of land resources. An enabling legal framework is also required.

3.4. Governments use economic instruments to express environmental costs and benefits in market prices, whereby all land resource users will be enabled to take account of environmental costs and benefits in their decision making.

3.5. Where environmental costs and benefits cannot be fully captured in taxes, subsidies or other economic instruments, governments provide incentives for voluntary action by land resource users, or use regulations to enable land resource users to take account of environmental costs and benefits in their decision making, with due consideration for the administrative costs of these regulations.

3.6. Economic instruments will be necessary but are, often, insufficient to promote improved land use. When complementary measures are required, projects should be designed accordingly, including activities such as formation and promotion of groups of land users, technology dissemination, field demonstrations, capacity building of user groups and of government support services and adaptive research institutions.

3.7. Where new economic "carriers" are considered necessary for sustainable development of rural areas, projects should be designed to include activities such as ecotourism, joint wildlife management with local communities, joint forest management with local communities, watershed management (with upstream conservation funded by downstream beneficiaries of more regular flows, reduced silt load, and improved water quality), and nature reserves and parks (with employment generated by the policing function). More generally, governments promote labour-intensive growth throughout the economy, and reverse discrimination against rural areas in the allocation of public expenditure to health, education and infrastructure.